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SEE PAGES 7-10 FOR PROGRAM OF NATIONAL COUNCIL CON-  
VENTION, BOSTON, NOVEMBER 24-26.

# THE ENGLISH LEAFLET

THE NEW ENGLAND  
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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WALTER S. HINCHMAN, PRESIDENT

A. B. DE MILLE, SEC'Y AND TREAS

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## ENGLISH PROBLEMS

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The ninth annual meeting of the National Council will be remembered as the first held in Boston. In a sense this meeting is really a homecoming, for it was here that the movement which brought the Council into existence was started. A resolution was passed by the English Round Table of the N. E. A., at the Boston meeting of 1910, which created a standing committee on college entrance requirements in English. This committee found it expedient to organize a national society of English teachers, able to deal effectively with the important issues that must be faced. Eight annual meetings and twelve special meetings have been held, none with greater interest and usefulness, however, than the annual convention of 1919 promises to have.

A glance at the program, which is printed in this "Leaflet", will discover a great variety of topics of current interest. In spite of the activities of the Council and of the various sectional bodies, some of them older than the national society, there are plenty of problems waiting for solution.

The war has of course greatly accelerated changes already in progress. A questionnaire sent out to the high schools in the Upper Ohio valley brought the information that a majority of these schools were in process of modifying their lists of readings. Burke, for example, seemed to be yielding to Wilson, and recent authors in general tended to receive new emphasis. Such changes are apparently general.

We are all coming more or less rapidly to new views of the school and its functions in our modern life.

It has become truly a common school,—even the so-called high school. It serves a varied population and hence must modify somewhat radically its academic traditions. There is certainly need to gather in council in order that the combined wisdom of the many may be at the disposal of each and all.

Conventions help to train leaders. The individual catches new views of the possibilities of the craft. Mind sharpeneth mind, and each goes back to his task with renewed courage and quickened aspirations.

Consider the problem of aims. Several of our speakers will address themselves to the topic of oral English. A short while since this was left to the tender mercies of the elocutionist, who conceived his task as that of training for public entertainment. Composition meanwhile meant writing paragraphs on paper. But English, it seems, is primarily a matter of speaking, and training in speaking then begins to be emphasized.

Now what is good speaking? What standards of performance shall the teacher of any school grade set for his pupils? Can a certain uniformity of attainment in speaking be demanded of young people in Atlanta, Syracuse, and Kalamazoo? And by what pedagogical means shall good speaking be induced? What shall the learner talk about? How shall he prepare himself? How utter his message? How shall his audience listen and suggest? Questions such as these need answer.

Akin to speaking is acting. In some schools the giving of plays has to some extent taken the place of the minute study of the text of certain well-known dramas. With what aims should such work be conducted? Acting is not, like speaking, a common everyday affair. Understanding and enjoyment of plays, at home and in the theatre, would seem to be the legitimate object. Or does acting in plays give a certain poise, readiness, and self-command desirable everywhere in social life? And should the few who will act as amateurs or professionals after school have opportunity to exploit their powers—to discover their aptitudes while in school or in college? If so, then practice in speaking should transcend the simple interchange of ideas and brief presentations of connected discourse which now seem to constitute oral composition.



Granting for the moment that the ability to compose ideas is properly provided for, what training in putting ideas on paper is essential at succeeding stages of the pupil's progress? Ordinary social letters are written by everyone. The conventions of such letters should obviously be taught early and well. The universality and social importance of the letter would seem to argue also for a serious attempt to set up ideals of tone and easy, graceful manner. Certainly courtesy and the desire to be interesting should be instilled.

Do these objects demand the use of classic examples? Should these be read merely as literature? Shall the essay form in general be attempted by high school pupils? Why? Are expository and argumentative papers so essential as instruments for carrying on the work of the school and of the college that all pupils must engage in ambitious and long-sustained efforts to master them? Or are they valuable primarily as modes of thinking? There is surely no consensus on such matters at present.

What of the mechanics of written composition? Shall the school aim to make every man his own proof reader? The art is capable of many niceties. By what principle shall the requirements to be set up for each stage of the pupil's progress be determined? What degree of perfection may be expected or demanded, for example, of the pupils who are about to leave the elementary school? Shall these demands be pressed in the case of all, or only of say seventy-five percent? Supposing that no plans of instruction will ever work out perfectly, what should the ninth grade teacher be expected to do in the case of boys and girls not up to grade? Ditto for the college?

After all what is a creditable composition, either oral or written, offered by a boy or girl of fourteen? Of sixteen? Does the answer depend upon the subjective impression of the individual teacher? That can hardly be sufficiently steady to warrant close decisions. At all events, individuals do not ordinarily agree. John may go to teacher A and Robert to teacher B. How does anybody know that the two boys will be held to the same standards? For that matter, how does either teacher know just what instruction the pupil most needs and how much of it? Suppose, also, Miss A conceives

"composition" as consisting in the writing of stories, ideal descriptions, literary essays and the like, while Miss B holds it to be her duty to train her pupils to speak and to write clear, simple, and correct accounts and explanations of matters in actual life. How will the boys fare now? Is the possibility just suggested so remote as to be negligible? Certainly not. What are we going to do about it?

Grammar and spelling deserve chapters to themselves. It must suffice here to point out that the principles by which selection of the facts to be taught and the habits to be formed is determined in other phases of English instruction will apply here. Some grammar and some spelling may undoubtedly be taught so as to be measurably useful. More would be, under present circumstances, a dispensable luxury. Our problem is to make sure that the right principles and the right words are so taught as to yield the largest possible return. Needless to say, not all pupils will require the same treatment either in kind or in degree.

This last remark might be made also with regard to reading. Barring a certain "core" of literature, American and other, not yet certainly determined, reading must be regarded as largely a matter of individual interest and taste. All persons should not be expected to like the same books; we do not expect them to be fond of all of their associates. Class work should be based apparently on those works known to make the surest and widest appeal. They will probably be found to be the best representatives of their type or kind of writing, and hence best fitted to develop the ability to enjoy books of that kind or type. For the rest, the library hour, the reading club, or other provision for individual choice must be sought. Perhaps a recent writer has the truth when he suggests that free library work should take the place of all intensive class study of great books? The proposal is revolutionary, but color is lent to it by the persistent rumors that the present mode fails of its announced purposes.

Possibly these purposes should be modified and redefined. Have we not rashly expected the youth of the land to glow over the art of our favorites when those same youth were, for the most part, able to rise only to the finesse of the knuckle-ball or the forward-pass?



Might not such delight in style as is possible for these boys and girls come as a by-product of a sincere effort to realize the poem, the story or the play as human experience, employing the author's devices—his pictures, his hints, his references forward and backward and the like—as means to that end? Perhaps it would be better to let the pupil say merely, "Reading is a game. As for me, I play."

Just now we are stirring the fire feverishly under the melting pot. We have foreigners in our midst. Americanization is the watchword. What may our literature do in this regard and how? Of course we must not preach, but the spirit, the ideals are there. Our history, our political system, our homes, our landscape, our art, our tolerance, our hopeful forward look are there, are writ large in Lowell, Lincoln, and all the rest. Can we manage so that the solutions of life's problems which these great Americans of the past offered, become also the solutions cherished by young America of today? If we can, one great instrument of Americanization is ready to our hand.

The handicap of the untrained teacher we must, for the present, struggle with. A more mature person, with a wide knowledge of educational aims and processes, and with longer tenure of office, must be available for the task of teaching English before we can confidently hope for much general improvement in the work. Doubtless the movement for higher salaries is the first step. After that requirements of candidates may be raised and the personnel improved.

To distribute the numbers would assist much. English is not yet regarded as a laboratory subject and hence classes in English are far too many and too large. The difficulty is aggravated by the pressure of extra-class room duties which the English teacher is frequently called upon to perform.

And the school-library is inadequate—indeed, its necessity and its possibilities are as yet almost wholly unrecognized. Can young people be trained in the use of books without collections of books to use? There would seem to be only one answer to that question.

It appears that English teachers have a full measure of problems which they must face, and which they do well to discuss wherever they meet in council. Certainly

those who gather in Boston during the first three days of Thanksgiving week will not lack themes. It is indeed fortunate that an attendance of so many who have been for years deeply concerned with the issues that will be raised is assured. Where if not in New England should the solutions of our English problems be found? Come, let us reason together!

JAMES FLEMING HOSIC.

*Editor, The English Journal*

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## EDITORIAL NOTES

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### ATTENDING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL CONVENTION

We believe that it is the duty of every member of our New England Association, who lives in eastern Massachusetts, to attend the meetings of the National Council of English Teachers in Boston, Nov. 24-26. The program printed on the following pages offers a wealth of good things to every teacher of English. This is an opportunity which never has come to us before and probably never will again. If we cannot leave our work to attend every session of the Convention, let us at least be present at one forenoon meeting, and at all of those in the afternoon and evening.

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Our regular December meeting in Boston will be omitted this year. In its place we have *three days* of English meetings, Nov. 24-26, with a wide variety of subjects and speakers to choose from.

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We regret that lack of space prevents us from printing all of the interesting news items that have come to us from our Local Meetings. A few are given on page 11.

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Our Association is grateful to the Boston Transcript for supplying us, free of charge, with 400 copies of their "Stranger's Directory," for the use of delegates to the National Council Convention.

NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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*Boston, Massachusetts, November 24-26, 1919*

All general sessions in the Lecture Hall, Boston Public Library, Boylston Street Entrance. Headquarters at the Hotel Brunswick.

PROGRAM

MONDAY FORENOON, NOVEMBER 24

Conference on the supervision of English teaching in the Lecture Hall at 9.30 o'clock.

Leaders: E. B. Richards, State Inspector of English, Albany, New York; Edward H. Webster, Technical High School, Springfield, Massachusetts; Maurice J. Lacey, Principal, West Roxbury High School, Boston; Edwin L. Miller, Principal, Northwestern High School, Detroit, Michigan.

Suggestions from the Work in the A. E. F.—C. C. Certaint, Director of English in the Post and Divisional Schools in France.

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MONDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 24

*General Session, 2:00 O'clock, Boston Public Library*

President's Address—Joseph M. Thomas, University of Minnesota.

The Discipline of Ideas—Irving Babbitt, Harvard University.

Composition as a Mode of Behaviour—Fred N. Scott, University of Michigan.

The Board of Directors will meet at the Hotel Brunswick at 4.30 o'clock.

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MONDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 24

*General Session, 8:00 O'clock, Boston Public Library*

A Symposium on Forward Movements in English Teaching

1. Local English Clubs in New England—W. S. Hinchman, Groton School, Groton, Mass.



2. Good English Clubs in the Schools,—Claudia E. Crumpton, Northwestern High School, Detroit, Mich.
  3. Standardizing the High School Library—Mary E. Hall, Girls' High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.
  4. Creative Study of Play-making—Theodore B. Hinckley, University of Chicago High School, Chicago.
  5. Standards in Composition—Sterling A. Leonard, Lincoln School, New York.
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TUESDAY FORENOON, NOVEMBER 25

*General Session, 9:30 O'clock, Boston Public Library*

Topic: Basic Principles and the Relations of Home,  
School, and College

1. Co-operation of all Factors—Horace A. Eaton, Syracuse University.
  2. What is "English"?—Henry S. Canby, Yale University.
  3. What the Schools Expect from the Colleges—Emma Breck, University School, University of California.
  4. Discussion.
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TUESDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 25

*Section Meetings, 2:00 O'clock*

High School Section

Lecture Hall, Boston Public Library

Chairman, A. B. Sias, West High School, Rochester, N. Y.

1. Unified Composition Courses—Cornelia Carhart Ward, Hunter College High School, New York City.
2. Standard Scales and Measurements in Diagnostic Teaching—Olive Ely Hart, South Philadelphia High School for Girls, Philadelphia, Pa.
3. The Place of Oral English in the High School Course—J. C. Tressler, Newtown High School, New York.
4. Discussion.

College Section

Business Administration Building, Boston University



Chairman, Ashley H. Thorndike—Columbia University  
Considerations For and Against the Proposed Humanistic Requirement for the Degree of Ph. D.—  
Leaders: Frank Aydloette, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John L. Lowes, Harvard University.

General Discussion.

Elementary School Section

Business Administration Building, Boston University  
Chairman, Burr F. Jones—Massachusetts Board of Education

Extension Section

Business Administration Building  
Chairman, Percy W. Long—Massachusetts State Board of Education, Boston

Library Section

Business Administration Building  
Chairman, Martha Pritchard—State Normal School, Bridgewater, Mass.

What the English Teacher Can Do with an Effective School Library—Speaker to be announced.

Discussion led by Emma Breck—University School, University of California.

What the Librarian Wants to do for the English Department—Anne Eaton, Librarian of Lincoln School of Teachers College, New York City.

Discussion, led by Marion Lovis—Stadium High School, Tacoma, Wash.

What the "Library Hour" Can Do in the Schools—James F. Hosis, Chicago Normal College.

Discussion, led by Edith Moses—State Normal School, Bridgewater, Mass.

Business, Meeting, Library Lecture Hall, 4.30 o'clock.

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WEDNESDAY FORENOON, NOVEMBER 26

*General Session, 9:30 O'clock, Boston Public Library*  
Unfinished Business.

The Question of Our Speech—Harry G. Paul, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.

Training Actors—Franklin H. Sargent, American Academy of Dramatic Art, New York City.

The Course in Plays—Frank T. Tompkins, Central High School, Detroit, Mich.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 26

*Conference on Teacher-Training, 2:00 O'clock, Library  
Lecture Hall*

Chairman, Charles S. Thomas, Director of English in Junior and Senior High Schools, Cleveland, Ohio.  
Suggestions to English Supervisors—Speaker to be announced.

Symposium on

The Visible Future Supply of Well-Trained Teachers of English

1. In the College, Franklin T. Baker—Teachers College, Columbia University.
2. In the High School, Harry G. Paul—University of Illinois.
3. In the Elementary School, Frank W. Ballou—Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Boston.
4. Discussion.

#### LIBRARY EXHIBIT

An exhibit of helps in teaching English and of books for school libraries will be installed in the Public Library by Mary Davis, Librarian, Brookline, Massachusetts, and Bertha E. Mahoney, Director of the Bookshop for Boys and Girls.

The New England School Library Association will serve tea on Tuesday afternoon to all visitors to the exhibit and will "talk shop".

#### HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Reservation of rooms should be made in advance. Rates at the Hotel Brunswick are \$2.00 for a single room with running water or \$2.50 with bath, and up. Other hotels near by are The Lenox, The Vendome, The Victoria, The Copley Square, The Copley Plaza, and The Westminster. Prices at the last two are \$4.00 and up.

#### THE ANNUAL DINNER

The annual dinner will be held at the Harvard Union on Tuesday evening at 6.30. *All are invited.* Reservations must be made with the secretary of the Council by Tuesday morning at 9.30. Plates will cost \$2.00 each. There will be speaking.

## LOCAL MEETINGS

## FRAMINGHAM CLUB

ALICE TREAT, *Organizer*

Representatives from eight of the seventeen towns invited to form this group met in Framingham on October 8th. Seventeen teachers were present and engaged in a lively discussion. They have agreed to hold their meetings in Framingham on the first Wednesday of the month. At the suggestion of Mrs. Bradley of Marlboro the next meeting will take the form of a theme-correcting party. To this meeting each member is to bring two themes—one good and one bad—which are, under the direction of Mrs. Bradley, to be discussed by the Club.

## NORTH OF BOSTON CLUB

RUTH L. S. CHILD, *Director*

The meetings of this group are held in Malden on the third Tuesday of the month. The Club membership represents twenty-two schools and twenty towns of Middlesex and Essex counties. At the March meeting Miss Frances Tucker of the Lynn Classical High School presented the practical side of the question of Co-ordination between high schools and grammar schools. The second aspect of the question—the ideal—was discussed at the April meeting, Miss Small of Medford presiding. At both these meetings representatives from the grammar and junior high schools of Malden and Medford were present. Supervised study was the subject of the May meeting.

The North of Boston Club held its first meeting of the season on October 14 in the Malden High School Library. The "Better Speech Drive," in which several of the members are actively interested, was the topic for discussion.

## WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE

C. W. ROBINSON, *Director*

On Oct. 11 in Central High School, Springfield, the first meeting of the Western Mass. Conference was held. Representatives were present from Amherst, Westfield, Greenfield, Mt. Holyoke, Smith, and all five Springfield high schools. It was voted to hold a big meeting on Dec. 6, in the Central High School.



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